

The Second Epistle General of PETER

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. In the earliest Greek manuscripts this epistle is entitled simply *Petrou B* (“Of Peter II”). Compare the title of 1 Peter (see p. 547).

2. Authorship. Since early times there has been considerable discussion with respect to the authorship of 2 Peter. Origen (c. A.D. 185–c. 254), the earliest writer who names the epistle, expresses doubt as to its authenticity (Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* vi. 25). Jerome (c. A.D. 340–420) says that questions had been raised about the style of the epistle. Other Church Fathers either felt grave doubts about it or rejected it outright. Eusebius (*ibid.* iii. 3; Loeb ed., vol. I, pp. 191, 193) says: “Of Peter, one epistle, that which is called his first, is admitted, and the ancient presbyters used this in their own writings as unquestioned, but the so-called second epistle we have not received as canonical, but nevertheless it has appeared useful to many, and has been studied with other Scriptures.” There are apparently no direct quotations from 2 Peter in the Christian writings of the first two centuries, but only scattered allusions that suggest an acquaintance with it. Doubt with respect to this epistle was most forcefully expressed in the church at Antioch, chiefly because of the absence of 2 Peter, together with 2 John, John, Jude, and the Revelation, from the Peshitta (see Vol. V, p. 135). This commentary holds that though these objections are impressive, they are more than offset by the evidence in behalf of the claim that the apostle Peter was the author of 2 Peter. For a summary of the evidence on which this commentary bases its conclusion in this matter see Vol. V, pp. 185, 186; Vol. VII, p. 547.

3. Historical Setting. 2 Peter is addressed to “them that have obtained like precious faith with us” (ch. 1:1), presumably referring to the readers of the first epistle (see p. 547). This appears to be confirmed by ch. 3:1. Peter must have been martyred no later than A.D. 67 (see Vol. VI, pp. 34, 102). His second epistle is thought to have been written shortly before this date. There is no evidence to determine where the epistle was written; most probably it was Rome.

4. Theme. As with 1 Peter, the theme is pastoral. The writer exhorts his readers to continue growth in grace and in spiritual knowledge, that God’s design in their calling and election might be fulfilled. In ch. 1 he encourages them by reference to his own experience and to the prophetic word. In ch. 2 he warns against false teachers. In ch. 3 a discussion of the scoffers’ rejection of the promise of Christ’s return leads to an affirmation of the certainty of the second coming and an exhortation to be ready for that great event.

5. Outline.

- I. Salutation and Introduction, 1:1–11.
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- II. Purpose of the Epistle, 1:12–21.
 - A. To establish believers in present truth, 1:12–15.
 - B. Confirmation of the gospel through personal experience, 1:16–18.
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- III. Warnings Against False Teachers, 2:1–22.
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- B. Punishment of the ungodly; deliverance of the righteous, 2:4–10a.
- C. True nature of the false teachers, 2:10b–22.
- IV. Christ's Second Coming and Preparation for His Appearing, 3:1–18.
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 - D. Exhortation to holy living in anticipation of the advent, 3:11–18.

CHAPTER 1

1 *Confirming them in hope of the increase of God's graces, 5 he exhorteth them, by faith, and good works, to make their calling sure: 12 whereof he is careful to remember them, knowing that his death is at hand: 16 and warneth them to be constant in the faith of Christ, who is the true Son of God, by the eyewitness of the apostles beholding his majesty, and by the testimony of the Father, and the prophets.*

1. Simon. Gr. *Sumeōn*, a transliteration of the Heb. *Shim'on*, "Simeon." The more common Greek transliteration is Simon. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for this latter transliteration. See on Matt. 4:18.

Peter. See on Matt. 4:18. For comment on the authorship of the epistle see p. 593.

Servant. Gr. *doulos* (see on Rom. 1:1).

Apostle. Gr. *apostolos*, "a messenger" (see on Mark 3:14; Acts 1:2; Rom. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1).

Of Jesus Christ. See on 1 Peter 1:1.

Obtained. Gr. *lagchanō*, "to receive," "to obtain by lot," used only here and in Luke 1:9; John 19:24; Acts 1:17 in the NT (cf. on Acts 1:17). *Lagchanō* is used to stress the divine origin of the inheritance. The gift is due to God's graciousness, and not to any inherent worth in the individual. The apostle does not specifically describe those to whom he is writing, but presumably they are the same believers to whom he addressed the first epistle (see p. 593; see on 1 Peter 1:1).

Like precious. Gr. *isotimos*, "equally precious," "equally honored."

Faith. This may refer to that faith by which the believers responded to God's call, or to the body of belief which they accepted on becoming Christians, or to both (cf. on Acts 6:7).

With us. That is, as we have. Peter equates his readers' faith with his own. The question as to whom "us" refers has occasioned much discussion. Some hold that Peter is speaking for the entire body of Jewish Christians, supposing that he is writing to Gentiles, as in the first epistle (see on 1 Peter 1:1). Others, believing him to be writing to Jews of the Diaspora (see on 1 Peter 1:1), interpret "us" as the apostle and the members of the local church where Peter was at the time of writing. Still others take "us" to be a reference to all the apostles who have shared their faith with the converted in many parts of the world. This last interpretation seems preferable, inasmuch as it avoids any dogmatic distinction other than the natural one between apostles and lay members.

Righteousness of God. For the various possible meanings of this phrase see on Rom. 1:17. For comment on "righteousness" (*dikaioσunē*) see on Matt. 5:6. Peter here explains

that his readers have shared in the same faith that he possesses, by virtue of divine mercy, which seeks to bring salvation to all.

Our Saviour. The Greek construction makes it reasonably certain that “God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” refers to one person, Jesus Christ. The phrase may be rendered “our God, even the Saviour Jesus Christ.” Such a clear acceptance of the deity of Jesus need cause no surprise, for Peter himself had acknowledged his Lord as “the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16) and had heard Thomas call Him “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). For comment on Christ’s titles and His deity see on Matt. 1:1; see Vol. V, pp. 917–919.

2. Grace and peace. See on Rom. 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:2.

Be multiplied. The readers already possessed grace and peace in some measure. Now the apostle would have them gain even greater supplies of these heavenly gifts (see ch. 3:18).

Through the knowledge. Or, “in knowledge.” The word here used for “knowledge” (*epignōsis*) is more emphatic than the simple noun form (*gnōsis*), and implies a fuller, more perfect knowledge that comes from contemplation of the object studied. Such knowledge cannot fail to influence the life of the one who gains it. When it centers on the Father and the Son it brings abundant grace and peace into the heart of its possessor. The apostle is very much aware of the efficacy of this *epignōsis*, and refers to it four times in this epistle (here; vs. 3, 8; ch. 2:20).

God, and of Jesus. In contrast with the similar phrase in v. 1, the Greek construction here indicates that the apostle refers to both the Father and the Son.

3. According as. Or, “seeing that.” The words that follow are an expansion of the thought that grace and peace come from personal acquaintance with God and Christ (v. 2).

His divine power. That is, Christ’s divine power, since He is the last person referred to in v. 2 and since He seems to be called “God” in v. 1. The word for “divine” (*theios*) is used in the NT only here, in v. 4, and in Acts 17:29, where it is rendered “Godhead.” The word for “power” (*dunamis*, see on Acts 1:8) is found combined with *theios* in Greek inscriptions of the 1st century A.D., and Peter is therefore employing a term with which his readers are doubtless acquainted. He is here stressing the might and majesty of his Lord, as he does elsewhere in the epistle (ch. 1:11, 16, 17), and shows what his Lord’s power can do for us.

Hath given. Gr. *dōreō*, “to present a gift,” “to bestow,” a stronger word than the usual *didōmi*, “to give.”

All things. A reminder that the Lord has withheld no necessary aid to our salvation.

Life. That is, spiritual life such as is required of the Christian, and also physical life (Acts 17:25, 28).

Godliness. Gr. *eusebeia*, “piety,” “religion” that is, Christian conduct (see on 1 Tim. 2:2). The gifts bestowed by Christ are to enable His followers to attain the standards set for them. The victorious life cannot be lived without the gifts; so it behooves us to accept and to use them.

Knowledge. Gr. *epignōsis* (see on v. 2).

Him that hath called. This may refer either to the Father, generally presented in the NT as the One who calls the Christian (Rom. 8:30), or to the Son, who called the disciples (Mark 3:13) and sinners (Matt. 9:13). If any distinction is made, it is without practical difference, since both Father and Son unite in the call. The call of either is equally effective.

To glory and virtue. Literally, “through glory and virtue,” but textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “to his own glory and virtue.” The word translated “virtue” (*aretē*) may be rendered “goodness,” “excellence” (see on Phil. 4:8; 1 Peter 2:9). The phrase under consideration may support the application to Christ of the words “him that hath called,” since it is primarily Christ’s own glory and excellence to which the striving Christian aspires. It is the sight of Christ “lifted up” that stimulates men to abandon sin and to follow after the glorious qualities the Saviour so persuasively displays.

4. Whereby. Or, “by means of which,” referring to the divine glory and excellence, which are themselves an earnest of the promises next mentioned.

Are given. Or, “have been bestowed.” The same verb and tense are used as in v. 3.

Exceeding great ... promises. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the following word order: “the precious and exceedingly great promises.” The word for “promises” (*epaggelmata*), occurring only here and in ch. 3:13 in the NT, may be translated “promised blessings,” referring to the fulfillment of the promises rather than simply to the promises as such. It doubtless refers to all the divine assurances that are fulfilled in a man’s salvation. But, in view of Peter’s later usage (ch. 3:13), the word may have special reference to the second coming and its attendant glory, in which event all divine promises find satisfying fulfillment.

That by these. That is, by the promised spiritual gifts already received by the believer.

Partakers. Gr. *koinōnoi* (see on 1 Peter 5:1).

Divine nature. For the word “divine” (*theios*) see on v. 3. Adam was created “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27), but sin came, and the divine image was marred. Christ came to restore that which was lost, and the Christian may therefore expect to have the divine image restored in his soul (see on 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 3:14). This possibility should ever be before the believer’s eyes to stimulate him to perfect Christ-likeness. He will attain to this goal to the extent that he accepts and uses the powers latent in the spiritual gifts Christ has made available to him. The transformation begins at the new birth and continues until Christ’s appearing (see on 1 John 3:2).

Having escaped. Gr. *apopheugō*, “to flee away from,” implying, not a rescue in which the Christian is a passive object, but an active flight from evil. This stresses an important truth: the believer is not saved *in* sin, but is given power to turn *from* sin, to escape from its clutches and thus to live free from its corrupting influence (see on Matt. 1:21). The tense of the verb, “having fled away from,” shows that the sharing in the divine nature can come only *after* the Christian has fled from the corruption.

Corruption. Gr. *phthora*, “decay,” “ruin,” “destruction,” used here as a fit term for the wickedness that is in the world.

World. Gr. *kosmos* (see on 1 John 2:15).

Through lust. The expression may be interpreted “by lust,” making lust the source of the evil that is in the world, or, “in lust,” making lust the sphere in which the evil manifests itself. For comment on “lust” (*epithumia*) see on Rom. 7:7.

5. And beside this. Rather, “Indeed and for this very reason.” Surely God’s purpose in bestowing promised blessings upon us (that we may share in the divine nature) is reason enough to stimulate us to greater zeal in pursuit of righteousness. God has done His part; we must now do ours.

Giving all diligence. Literally, “having brought in by the side all diligence.” For comment on “diligence” (*spoudē*) see on Rom. 12:8, 11. We are to add our diligent pursuit of Christian virtues to the gifts God has already bestowed. Working along with God, the Christian is enabled to develop the sanctified life.

Add. Gr. *epichorēgeō*, “to supply,” “to furnish.”

To your faith. Or, “in connection with your faith.” Here Peter begins his list of virtues, sometimes aptly called “Peter’s ladder.” It appears that similar lists were current in the Hellenistic world. Peter’s list differs from these others, however, in its inspiration and Christian setting and in its implication that one virtue develops from another.

Virtue. Gr. *aretē* (see on v. 3). Peter’s thought may be paraphrased, “in connection with your faith, supply moral excellence.” By heeding such counsel the Christian will build a balanced life.

Knowledge. As with the previous phrase, this may be rendered, “in connection with moral excellence [supply] knowledge.” The “knowledge” (*gnōsis*) doubtless refers to a practical understanding of God’s ways and plans for the individual rather than to a merely intellectual knowledge (cf. on 1 Cor. 1:5; 12:8).

6. Temperance. Gr. *egkrateia*, “self-control” (see on Acts 24:25), which is to predominate in all departments of the believer’s life. The preceding qualities will be of little avail if not accompanied by self-control on the Christian’s part. See on Gal. 5:23.

Patience. Gr. *hupomonē*, literally, a “remaining under,” stressing a brave, steadfast perseverance under adversity (see on Rom. 5:3).

Godliness. Or, “reverence toward God” (see on v. 3). This quality will prevent the Christian from becoming pharisaical; it will keep him humble and gentle.

7. Brotherly kindness. Gr. *philadelphia*, “love of the brethren.” In classical Greek the word implies affection for one’s blood relatives, but in the NT *philadelphia* embraces all members of the church (see on Rom. 12:10). In a church surrounded by paganism there would be great need of genuine brotherly love. The need of the modern church is no less great in this respect.

Charity. Gr. *agapē*, “love” (see on Matt. 5:43; 1 Cor. 13:1). This is the true Christian affection that seeks only the good of the one loved. *Agapē* is an affection based on knowledge and reason, an affection that is willing to sacrifice self for the best good of the loved one. This is what God feels for Christ and for men, and what He wishes men to feel for one another. This is the capstone, the crown, of all the preceding qualities listed by Peter. It is the greatest of all virtues (1 Cor. 13:13); it is that which must govern all we do (ch. 16:14). All the virtues meet in this greatest emotion; and all others fail and are less

than nothing without it (1 Cor. 13:1–3). It is that which does no ill to his neighbor (Rom. 13:10); its absence cannot be compensated for by sacrifice, not even of life itself (1 Cor. 13:3).

8. For if. Peter is not satisfied with the presence of the preceding virtues in the Christian's life; he intends that they should flourish and increase in potency and possibly in numbers (see on ch. 3:18).

They make you ... be. Or, "they keep you from being."

Barren. Gr. *argoi*, "lazy," or "idle." It is impossible for one who is endued with the virtues detailed in vs. 5–7 to be an idle member of the church. His faith, brotherly kindness, and love, to mention only three of the eight qualities listed, will impel him to work for others and for his Lord's kingdom.

Unfruitful. Here the apostle includes a promise that Christian service, rendered through the operation of the basic qualities that have just been examined, will be productive. As money well invested is expected to yield dividends, as a field cultivated is expected to produce good crops, so the Christian life, well furnished with every needed virtue, is certain to produce results (cf. Phil. 1:11; James 3:17).

Knowledge. Gr. *epignōsis*, as in v. 2 (see comment there), not *gnōsis*, as in v. 5. The preceding virtues can be developed, applied, and find their true end only in connection with a full knowledge of Jesus Christ. If they are not fulfilled in connection with Jesus, they will fail to produce their true fruitage, but if they function in continual connection with the Saviour, their fruitfulness need know no limit.

9. But he that lacketh these things. One in whom the graces mentioned by Peter are missing cannot intimately know Jesus, and is without the Light of the world. He is able to see the things of the world but is terribly shortsighted in respect to spiritual matters. He is, as the apostle says, "blind."

Cannot see afar off. Gr. *muōpazō*, "to be shortsighted," whence our English word, "myopic." Peter is speaking of professing Christians who have failed to add the desired virtues to their initial "faith" (v. 5). All such lack spiritual sight. They are dimly aware of spiritual values, but are incapable of perceiving their true value. They find it easier to see the things that are close at hand, the things of the world.

Purged ... sins. The incomplete Christian of whom Peter is speaking is so faulty that he has allowed the fact of his former justification, testified to by his baptism, to slip from his mind (cf. 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). The person who forgets the cleansing of all the sins he committed up to the time of his justification is indeed in danger of rejecting the cross of Christ and of losing the basis for growth in spiritual knowledge and sanctification.

10. Wherefore the rather. Or, "wherefore the more," that is, in view of all the reasoning outlined in vs. 3–9, Peter's readers ought to give added attention to the matter of salvation.

Brethren. By using this word the apostle affectionately associates himself with his readers.

Give diligence. Gr. *spoudazō*, "to endeavor," "to exert oneself," usually implying haste. The apostle clearly understood the central position of Christ in effecting man's salvation, but wished to make the believers aware of their own responsibility to cooperate with the divine agencies.

Calling. See on Rom. 8:30; Phil. 3:14.

Election. See on Rom. 9:11.

Sure. Gr. *bebaios*, “stable,” “fast,” “established.” The calling and election are an act of God (1 Peter 1:2; 2:21); yet it is possible for one to “frustrate the grace of God” (Gal. 2:21). Accordingly, the believer needs to “work out” his “own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). He will then be making a certainty of what God has already desired and made possible.

Fall. Or, “stumble.” The apostle is not implying that he who follows his counsel will never fall into sin, but that such a one will not fall from God’s calling and election. We may sin, but we shall triumph over sin, and not utterly fall from grace and forfeit salvation provided, of course, we fulfill the conditions the apostle lays down (cf. on 1 John 3:6–9).

11. For so. That is, by fulfilling the advice given in v. 10.

Ministered. Peter here uses the same Greek verb translated “add” in v. 5. Through promised divine power we are to furnish our lives with solid Christian virtues (vs. 5–7); then God will be able to furnish us with an eternal home in the kingdom of His dear Son.

Abundantly. Rather, “richly.” All of the Lord’s gifts are generously bestowed. The future He has prepared for faithful believers will surpass man’s highest expectations (cf. on 1 Cor. 2:9, 10) and will prove to be rich indeed.

Everlasting kingdom. Rather, “eternal kingdom.” This is the only place in the NT where the adjective “eternal” is joined to “kingdom.” It is most commonly used with “life” (see on John 3:16).

Lord ... Christ. This title for Christ confirms the suggestion that the corresponding phrase in v. 1 also applies to the Saviour (see comment there). The kingdom is His (Luke 22:30; John 18:36), but also His Father’s (Matt. 6:33; 26:29; Mark 14:25). It is the kingdom that has been prepared for the faithful from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34; see on ch. 4:17).

12. Wherefore. This word suggests the anxiety of the apostle and his sense of personal responsibility with respect to the dangers threatening the church in his day.

I will not be. Peter is prepared to fulfill his spiritual responsibility by continuing to teach the truths presented in vs. 3–11. He realizes the necessity of maintaining a firm faith in the truths of the kingdom, and the faithful practice of the duties involved.

Established. Gr. *stērizō* (see on Rom. 16:25). Peter has carried out his Master’s command (Luke 22:32) by ensuring that his readers are made firm in the faith.

The present truth. Or, “the truth that is present [with you],” that is, in the truth which the readers have been taught. The word “truth” (*alētheia*) refers to the whole body of Christian teaching in which the believers had already been instructed, and which they “know” (cf. on John 8:32).

13. I think. Gr. *hēgeomai*, originally, “to go before [another],” “to step out in front,” later, “to deem,” “to consider.” The apostle deems it his duty to step out prominently to warn the church by stirring up the members’ minds. This was a duty in which he did not dare fail.

Meet. Or, “right,” “just,” in reference to his duty.

Tabernacle. Or, “tent,” conveying the idea of a temporary dwelling. Peter is thinking of his mortal, material body as but a temporary thing eventually to be replaced by an

immortal one (see 1 Cor. 15:50–53; cf. on 2 Cor. 5:1). He plans to be, as long as he lives, a faithful pastor of the flock which the Lord has placed in his charge.

To stir. Gr. *diegeirō*, “to arouse thoroughly.” Peter’s use of the present tense implies “to keep on thoroughly arousing.” Peter planned to continue his good work as long as necessary.

By putting ... remembrance. A similar phrase occurs in ch. 3:1. The writer feels that a clear reminder of the basis of their faith will be sufficient to reaffirm their confidence in Christian teaching.

14. Knowing. The apostle’s knowledge is sure, for it comes from the Lord Himself (see below).

Shortly. Gr. *tachinos*, “suddenly,” or “soon.” Peter may refer to his approaching death as violent or simply as imminent. The Lord had told Peter that he was to die a violent death (John 21:18, 19). On the other hand the apostle was no longer a young man and may have surmised that his end was near, as indeed it was.

I must put off. Literally, “the putting off,” a metaphor that is more appropriate for a garment than a tent.

Shewed. Gr. *dēloō*, “to make plain,” “to point out,” “to indicate,” variously translated as “declare,” “signify” elsewhere in the NT (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13; 1 Peter 1:11; etc.). The Greek here points to a definite time, that is, the time when the Lord foretold Peter’s death (John 21:18, 19).

15. I will endeavour. Or, “I shall be diligent.” Compare the phrase, “give diligence” (v. 10).

Decease. Gr. *exodos*, “exit,” “departure.” From *exodos* comes the English word “exodus.” Luke uses *exodos* in his Transfiguration story, when he records that Moses and Elijah spoke of Christ’s “decease [*exodos*] which he should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). Note that Peter does not expect to be alive at the time of his Lord’s return; he accepts Christ’s prophecy concerning his death.

Always. Or, “at every time,” that is, as the need arises.

Remembrance. Peter hoped his readers would remember his words, which they had hidden in their hearts. But if they should forget, they could turn to his letter and refresh their memory with his wise counsel.

16. Cunningly devised. Or, “cleverly devised,” “artfully planned.”

Fables. Gr. *muthoi*, from which comes our word “myths.” Peter may be referring to heathen myths about the descent of gods in human guise, or, more probably, he is warning against teachings that were being propagated by the false teachers whom he exposes in ch. 2 (cf. 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:18; Titus 1:14).

Made known. Perhaps through Peter’s own first epistle (1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13), through his influence on the Gospel of Mark (see Vol. V, pp. 563, 564), or through previous personal instruction he had given his readers.

Power and coming. The Greek indicates that both refer to the same event. Peter had witnessed the miracles done by Christ. He saw the miracle of the Transfiguration, which was a miniature representation of the future kingdom of glory (DA 422). Here, however, he is thinking primarily of the manifestation of divine power that will accompany the second coming, of which the Transfiguration was a pledge. This is strongly suggested by

the fact that *dunamis*, “power,” has the definite article; *parousia*, “coming,” does not; both nouns are in the same case and joined by the conjunction, and are thus a unit in thought: divine power in connection with the second coming. For comment on *parousia* see on Matt. 24:3.

Eyewitnesses. The fact that the apostles had been eyewitnesses of the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ convinced them that He was indeed the promised Messiah, the Son of God. In turn, this conviction imparted irresistible power to the message they proclaimed. See on Luke 1:2; 1 John 1:1–3.

Of his majesty. Literally, “of that one’s magnificence.” The fact that the three apostles were eyewitnesses of the magnificent glory of Christ at the Transfiguration is proof of their trustworthiness as preachers of the second coming. Divine power at the Transfiguration proclaimed the deity of Christ to the three apostles (2 Peter 1:17; Matt. 17:5); divine power will make known the same truth to all the world at the second coming.

17. He received. This refers to the actual time of the Transfiguration.

Honour and glory. The honor of being openly acknowledged by the Father, and the glory that shone from His person at the Transfiguration, reminiscent of the Shekinah, made abundantly clear that Jesus of Nazareth was worthy of being honored and worshiped by all created beings. See on John 1:14.

A voice. See on Matt. 17:5.

Excellent. Gr. *megaloprepēs*, “befitting a great man,” “full of majesty,” “magnificent,” used only here in the NT, but found in the LXX (Deut. 33:26), where it may be rendered “Magnificent One,” with reference to God. Peter applies the word to the “bright cloud” that overshadowed the participants in, and the witnesses of, the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5).

Beloved Son. The complete expression is identical with that given in Matthew’s Gospel (see on Matt. 17:5). Peter would never forget the message uttered by the divine voice. Its import conditioned his concept of the Son, of whom the Father spoke.

18. We heard. The pronoun is emphatic in the Greek. Peter thus stresses the personal authority of the three apostles as eyewitnesses.

We were with him. A subtle but clear emphasis on the trustworthiness of the report. Peter and his companions had actually been present with Jesus at the time of the Transfiguration, and were therefore fully qualified to testify concerning its reality and its import.

Holy mount. The mountain cannot now be identified (see on Matt. 17:1), but of its holiness there can be no doubt, for the Holy One of God had been revealed there in His majestic glory. Apart from Christ’s presence, however, the mount had no sanctity (cf. on Ex. 3:5).

19. We have also. Or, “and we have,” which suggests that in the words that follow, Peter speaks of something additional to his unique experience at the Transfiguration, although in no way superseding it. Peter’s readers had not been present at the Transfiguration and might tend to doubt that it confirmed “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 16). But there is something equally convincing to Peter, and perhaps more so to his readers—the “more sure word of prophecy.”

A more sure word of prophecy. Rather, “the prophetic word made more sure.” In large measure Peter and his companions derived their firm convictions concerning the mission of Christ from the way in which His life fulfilled OT prophecies (cf. Acts 2:22–36; 3:18; 4:10, 11, 23–28; etc.). This knowledge, added to their personal acquaintance with the Lord during His earthly ministry (cf. 1 John 1:1–3), gave them an unshakable basis for their Christian faith. They spent their lives sharing that faith with others, and thus built up the early church. Christ’s representatives today have the same mission to fulfill.

Whereunto ... heed. Peter here specifically addresses his readers, as the pronoun “ye” clearly indicates. By the relative pronoun “whereunto” he may be referring either to his entire line of reasoning (vs. 16–18), which connects the Transfiguration and the prophetic word in support of his convictions, or solely to the prophetic word which he has just mentioned. Both interpretations are valid, and either would direct the readers’ minds to the Scriptures as the source of guidance and authority.

Light. Gr. *luchnos*, “lamp” (see on Ps. 119:105; Matt. 5:15).

A dark place. Or, “a squalid place,” which may be dark as well as dirty. Peter’s readers lived in the squalid, dark environment of heathen society and needed all possible spiritual light in order to avoid the many pitfalls that beset them.

The day. Rather, “day,” although textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the inclusion of the definite article. Peter’s mind appears to have passed, quite naturally, from the Transfiguration, which prefigured the Lord’s glorious return, to the great “day” itself. He was not only reminding his readers of the spectacle that he had beheld on the mount, but was directing their minds to the glorious event it foreshadowed—the second coming of Christ in power and glory.

Dawn. Literally, “shine through,” as a light that pierces the gloom. The apostle knew his Lord’s coming would dispel the world’s darkness and usher in everlasting light. There would then not be the same need for the lamp; the Light of the world would give all the light necessary to His people. Peter may also have been thinking of the dawn of the day that brings salvation to the individual heart.

Day star. Gr. *phōsphoros*, a compound of *phōs*, “light,” and the verb *pherō*, “to bear,” hence, “light bearer,” or “light bringer.” *Phōsphoros*, occurring only here in the NT, was used of the planet Venus, sometimes known as the morning star (cf. on Isa. 14:12). The apostle here doubtless refers to Christ (cf. on Mal. 4:2; Luke 1:78, 79; Rev. 2:28; 22:16).

In your hearts. Or, “in your minds.” Peter hereby stresses the experience of the believer when faith in Christ fully takes hold. This certainty of conviction is the focus of the line of reasoning followed in vs. 16–19.

20. Knowing this first. That is, when the Christian comes to study the prophetic word he should constantly keep in mind the basic principle that the apostle now enunciates.

Prophecy of the scripture. Peter here refers to the writings of the OT, possibly distinguishing between the inspired word and the utterances of the false prophets of whom he treats in ch. 2.

Private interpretation. Or, “one’s own interpretation,” referring to the prophet who originally gave the prophecy. The prophet was the Holy Spirit’s mouthpiece, and thus under divine guidance. He was not to intrude his own ideas into the messages that were given him for the benefit of God’s people. The same principle holds true in a study of the

prophecies—the reader should strive to understand the Spirit-inspired meaning of the passage under consideration.

21. For the prophecy. Rather, “for prophecy.” Peter speaks of prophecy in general, not of some particular passage. For comment on “prophecy” see on Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10.

In old time. Gr. *pote*, “formerly,” “ever,” here meaning in OT times.

By the will of man. True prophecy is a revelation from God. The initiative comes from God. He decides what shall be revealed and what shall remain concealed. Unless the Holy Spirit impresses the mind, man is incapable of prophesying—of speaking forth for God—no matter how ardently he may wish to do so.

Holy men of God spake. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading “men spoke from God,” that is, men who were moved by the Holy Spirit spoke the messages they had received from God. Men who are moved by the Holy Spirit will be holy men, men of God. Whichever reading is adopted the meaning is virtually the same.

Moved. Gr. *pherō*, here used in the passive sense, “to be conveyed,” “to be borne,” with a suggestion, perhaps, of speed or force, as by wind. In Acts 27:15, 17 the word is used for the driving of a ship before the wind, and in Acts 2:2 for a *rushing* mighty wind as the Holy Spirit descended on the believers at Pentecost. Here the use of *pherō* implies that the prophets were borne along by the Spirit as a ship is borne along by a wind. They were entirely under the Spirit’s motivation.

Holy Ghost. Or, Holy Spirit (see on Matt. 1:18). This is the only direct reference to the Spirit in this epistle.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 TM 258

1–8AA 529

1–112T 471

2 MYP 116; SL 95; 4T 244; 6T 148

2, 3 5T 742

2–4TM 227

2–7COL 281

3 AA 531; MH 409; ML 96

4 AH 127; COL 314; CS 26; CT 51, 252, 449, 489; DA 123, 153, 389, 671, 675; FE 86, 136, 291, 347; MB 22, 75, 78; MH 180, 181; ML 46, 274, 276, 277; MM 85, 145; MYP 81, 165; SL 95; Te 107, 192; TM 377, 435; 1T 531; 2T 44, 46, 50, 92, 126, 267, 317, 400, 451, 476, 534, 563; 3T 115, 241, 478, 484; 4T 38, 48; 5T 267, 333, 420, 594, 731, 741; 6T 52, 443, 456; 8T 207; 9T 68, 135, 151, 155, 176, 187, 279; WM 83, 296

5 CH 107; CW 126; ML 96; 1T 552; 5T 554

5, 6 2T 70, 360, 361

5–7CT 162; 2T 342; 3T 132; 6T 147

5–8FE 305; ML 95; MYP 45, 116; SL 94; 9T 186

5–11GC 470; CT 15

6 ML 97; 2T 95

9 Ev 215

9–11AA 533

10 CS 225; CT 505; EW 58; FE 119, 126, 251; PP 208; 1T 503, 710; 2T 145; 5T 97, 331,
 353; 6T 304; 9T 187; WM 317
 10, 11 ML 339; MYP 116; PP 207; SL 94; 6T 147; 9T 191
 11 8T 125
 12 EW 63
 12–21AA 534
 16 COL 43; CSW 34; DA 425; Ev 171; MM 103
 16–21CW 116; FE 445
 17 4T 533
 19 AA 165; DA 464; GC 312, 521; MM 99; 2T 632; 4T 592; 5T 12; 9T 19
 21 GC v, 324; 4T 9, 147

CHAPTER 2

1 *He foretelleth them of false teachers, shewing the impiety and punishment both of them and their followers: 7 from which the godly shall be delivered, as Lot was out of Sodom: 10 and more fully describeth the manners of those profane and blasphemous seducers, whereby they may be the better known, and avoided.*

1. But there were. Or, “but there arose,” with emphasis on the contrast between the prophets of God, who have just been discussed (ch. 1:20, 21) and the false teachers, with whom the apostle now deals.

False prophets. See on Matt. 7:15. Peter refers to a historical fact with which his readers were well acquainted—there had been many false prophets at work in OT times (see on Jer. 14:13). Later he refers to an outstanding example, Balaam (2 Peter 2:15).

The people. That is, Israelites.

There shall be. The future tense suggests that the false teachers have not yet begun their destructive work among the believers to whom Peter is writing, although they are already operating elsewhere, since in vs. 10–22 the present and past tenses are both used with reference to them. One of the chief purposes the apostle has in writing is to warn his readers against the insidious deceptions of these false teachers, that his flock may be saved from their snares.

False teachers. Peter distinguishes between a prophet and a teacher. The first claims to deliver God’s message; the second, to interpret the message.

Among you. This may imply that the false teachers would arise from among the believers themselves, or that they would come among them from outside (cf. Acts 20:29, 30).

Who. Gr. *hoitines*, “such kind,” that is, the false teachers are the kind of people who bring in heresies.

Privily shall bring in. Literally, “will bring into by the side of,” possibly implying the secret nature of the entrance of the false teachers, who would come in as spies slip into a country.

Damnable heresies. Literally, “heresies of destruction,” or “heresies of perdition,” that is, heresies that lead to perdition. The word for “perdition” is *apōleia* (see on John 17:12). In this epistle Peter makes frequent use of *apōleia* (twice in this verse; in v. 3; and in ch. 3:7, 16).

Heresies. Gr. *haireseis* (see on Acts 5:17; 1 Cor. 11:19). In the course of this present chapter the apostle refers to many of the heresies propagated by these false teachers—

denial of the Lord (v. 1), licentious teachings (vs. 10, 18), turning from the holy commandment (v. 21), etc. Peter's description of their work justifies the strong language in which he condemns them.

Denying. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 4. What memories must have come to Peter's mind when using this word that reminded him of his own denial of his Lord (see on Matt. 26:75; cf. Matt. 10:33)!

Lord. Gr. *despotēs* "master" (see on Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24). The word was used by slaves in addressing their masters. It implies absolute lordship, ownership, usually by purchase. *Despotēs* is a peculiarly appropriate title for Christ because of the price He has paid for man's redemption (see on Matt. 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20). There can be no worse heresy than to live a life such as the false teachers obviously did, denying the Master who had given His own life to redeem them from sin and its consequences. That they denied their Lord implies that they had once been Christians, even though they had since apostatized.

Swift destruction. Or, "sudden perdition," that is, unexpected destruction. Compare on ch. 1:14, where the word here translated "swift" is rendered "shortly." The end of all untruth is destruction, both to its teachers and to their followers.

2. Shall follow. Or, "shall follow out," implying a close imitation of the deceivers. The apostle bravely faces the prospect that many will follow the false teachers, while hoping that this warning will save his readers from such fatal deception.

Pernicious ways. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "lascivious doings" (*aselgeiai*). Use of the word *aselgeiai* here and in v. 18 suggests that the doctrines of the false teachers encouraged licentiousness among their followers, and that this moral laxness attracted many unstable characters.

By reason of whom. Some apply these words to the false teachers. It is perhaps better to apply them to the church members who engage in the immoral practices taught by the false teachers.

Way of truth. That is, the way that is truth, the Christian way. For comment on the "way" see on Acts 9:2; 16:17.

Evil spoken of. Literally, "shall be blasphemed." The heathen did not distinguish between genuine Christians and those who were following the false teachers and engaging in their immoral practices. Christian teaching was blamed for the excesses of the backsliders. The un-Christlike conduct of a few brings discredit upon the whole church.

3. Through covetousness. Rather, "in covetousness," covetousness being the element in which the false teachers operated to deceive and extract wealth from the unwary (cf. 1 Tim. 6:5; Titus 1:11; Jude 16). Compare the experience of Balaam (Num. 22 to 24). For "covetousness" see on Rom. 1:29; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5.

Feigned. Gr. *plastoi*, "molded," "formed," hence, "forged," "fabricated" (cf. our word "plastic"). These false teachers pretended to have secret knowledge and persuaded believers to give them money in exchange for it, thus revealing their real motives.

Make merchandise. Gr. *emporeuomai*, "to go a trading," "to travel for business." Our English word "emporium" comes from the same root. The teachers were trading with the souls of their victims, selling them false doctrine in return for their gifts. Believers

who gave of their means to enrich those lying teachers certainly received small returns for their money.

Whose judgment ... lingereth not. Literally, “for whom the sentence out of long time is not inactive.” The sentence long ago decided by God is not a dead letter and cannot be ignored.

Damnation. Gr. *apōleia* (see on v. 1). The reference here is to the final destruction of the false teachers.

Slumbereth. Gr. *nustazō*, “to nod the head in sleep,” found in the NT only here and in Matt. 25:5. Peter’s previous phrase concerned the sentence of judgment; he now assures the faithful that the sentence will be executed according to God’s plan.

4. For if God spared not. With these words the apostle begins a series of illustrations concerning the inevitability of God’s judgments. This thought carries over into v. 9, where he draws the conclusion that the Lord will deliver the godly and punish the ungodly. For comment on the verb “to spare” (*pheidomai*) see on Rom. 8:32.

The angels. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 6. The writer does not specify the sin that brought about the fall of these angels (cf. on Jude 6; Rev. 12:4, 7–9). Peter’s reasoning is that if God did not spare angels, spirit beings who had lived in His very presence, He will not fail to punish wicked men who lead others astray.

Cast them down to hell. A rendering of the one Greek word *tartarōō*, “to hold captive in Tartarus.” The ancient Greeks considered Tartarus to be the abode of the wicked dead and the place where punishment was meted out to them. It thus corresponded to the Gehenna of the Jews (cf. on Matt. 5:22). Writing to people who lived in a Hellenistic atmosphere, Peter employs a Greek term to convey his thought, but does not thereby endorse either the Greek idea of Tartarus or the popular Jewish concept of Gehenna. Here, Tartarus refers simply to the place of abode to which the evil angels are restricted until the day of judgment.

Chains of darkness. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “pits of darkness.” Peter’s language is figurative, and does not serve to identify any particular place as the abode of the fallen angels. This phrase differs from that used by Jude in his parallel passage (see Jude 6).

Judgment. Gr. *krisis*, “[the act of] judging.” In v. 3 Peter uses a different word for “judgment” (*krima*), which refers to the verdict that results from judging (cf. on John 3:19; 9:39; 16:11). Here the apostle looks to the future, when the judgment determined upon Satan and his angelic followers will finally be executed (see on Rev. 20:10).

5. And spared not. With these words the apostle begins his second illustration concerning the certainty of judgment (cf. on v. 4).

The old world. That is, the world which was before the Flood.

Saved. Gr. *phulassō*, “to guard,” “to watch,” here, in the sense of “protect” (cf. Gen. 7:16).

Eighth. Gr. *ogdoos*, “eighth,” that is, accompanied by seven others, in this case, the immediate members of Noah’s family (see Gen. 6:10; 7:7). Peter’s emphasis here is on the fact that so few—only eight—escaped alive from the antediluvian world.

Preacher. Gr. *kēlux*, “herald” (see on 1 Tim. 2:7). From ancient times the office *kēlux* was sacred and his person inviolable, since the herald was regarded as being under the immediate protection of the gods. Noah was the Lord’s “herald of righteousness,” that is, he proclaimed a message concerning righteousness. Josephus (*Antiquities* i. 3. 1 [72–74]) records the Jewish tradition that Noah tried to persuade his contemporaries to change their lives for the better (cf. on Gen. 6:3; 1 Peter 3:19, 20).

Bringing in. Rather, “while he brought.”

Flood. See on Gen. 7:17–24.

Ungodly. Gr. *asebeis*, singular *asebēs* (see on Rom. 4:5). That Peter’s description of the antediluvian world was justified may be seen from Gen. 6:1–7 (cf. PP 90–92).

6. And turning. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 7. This is the third illustration of God’s judgments (cf. on 2 Peter 2:4, 5). The Greek word for “turning into ashes” (*tephroō*) is used by the classical writer Dio Cassius (*Roman History* lxvi. 21) to describe the eruption of Vesuvius.

Sodom and Gomorrha. For a description of the destruction of these cities see on Gen. 19:24, 25.

Overthrow. Literally, “catastrophe.” This may imply an additional act of judgment after the reduction of the cities to ashes (cf. on Gen. 19:25).

Making. Or, “having set.”

Ensample. Gr. *hupodeigma*, “example,” that is, a warning.

Ungodly. The phrase reads literally, “those about to live ungodly.” The terrible fate of the cities of the plain was to discourage others from indulging in the same wickedness that brought about their downfall.

7. Delivered. Or, “rescued.” As God saved Noah from the Flood, so He rescued Lot and his family from the holocaust that consumed Sodom (Gen. 19:15, 16). Although Peter is primarily concerned with the certainty of divine judgments, he is careful also to emphasize the Lord’s merciful acts.

Just. Gr. *dikaiois* (see on Matt. 1:19). The word occurs twice in 2 Peter 2:8, where it is translated “righteous.”

Vexed. Gr. *kataponeō*, “to tire down with toil,” giving the picture of Lot’s being utterly worn out and disgusted by the immorality of the people of Sodom. In v. 8 a different Greek word is also translated “vexed.”

Conversation. Gr. *anastrophē*, “conduct,” “behavior.” *Anastrophē* is used 6 times in 1 Peter and twice in this epistle (here and in ch. 3:11).

Wicked. Gr. *athesmoi*, from *a*, “without,” and *thesmoi*, “laws,” “ordinances,” hence, “lawless ones”; usually those who rebel against divine ordinances. *Athesmoi* occurs only here and in ch. 3:17 in the NT.

8. Dwelling. Peter uses a rare and emphatic word *egkatoikeō* to convey the thought of Lot’s residence in the very midst of the wicked inhabitants of Sodom.

In seeing and hearing. Literally, “by sight and by hearing.” Sinful deeds assailed Lot on all sides, attacking his integrity through his eyes and his ears until there seemed no escape from their insidious influence.

Vexed. Gr. *basanizō*, “to torture,” “to torment,” with the tense emphasizing that the torture went on day after day. Lot suffered continued mental pain as daily he beheld his neighbors’ vicious ways.

Unlawful deeds. Rather, “lawless deeds.”

9. The Lord knoweth. The apostle now reaches the end of his long train of illustrations begun in v. 4 and draws the conclusion that in view of the Lord’s care over Noah and Lot, and His judgments against their wicked contemporaries, the believer may completely rely on God’s justice.

Deliver. Compare on v. 7.

Godly. Gr. *eusebēs*, elsewhere translated “devout” (Acts 10:2, 7).

Temptations. Literally, “temptation,” which here appears to refer to enticement to sin and the trials that come upon those who steadfastly resist sin (cf. on James 1:2, 12). The assurance of the Lord’s protection would fortify the readers of the epistle to withstand the allurements presented by the false teachers.

To reserve. Or, “to keep” (cf. v. 4).

Unjust. Gr. *adikoi*, used here as the opposite of *eusebēs*, “godly.”

Day of judgment. In this epistle Peter equates “the day of judgment” with “the day of the Lord” (cf. ch. 3:7, 10) and “the day of God” (v. 12). For a discussion of the day of judgment see on Rev. 14:7; 20:11–15.

To be punished. Gr. *kolazomenous*, a present participle, literally, “being punished.”

There are two well-defined schools of thought concerning Peter’s theology at this point:

1. That the participle “being punished” expresses purpose, as reflected in the translation “to be punished,” that is, for the purpose of being punished. This explanation assigns the punishment here mentioned to the day of judgment.
2. That the participle should be translated “while being punished,” with reference to the retribution that sin brings to the unjust during their earthly lives. This interpretation accords more closely with the first half of v. 9, according to which the godly are delivered from the temptations and trials that beset them in this life. But the unjust, at the same time, are suffering as a result of their misdeeds. This interpretation has the further advantage of preserving the force of the present tense of the participle *kolazomenous*,

“being punished,” in harmony with the present tense of the infinitive *tērein*, “to reserve.”

For further discussion see *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 237–240.

To interpret this passage as meaning that wicked men after death and before the judgment are under punishment runs counter to the whole tenor of Scripture (see on Luke 16:19; Rev. 14:10, 11).

10. But chiefly. Peter now returns to the contemporary scene and again deals with the false teachers and their corrupting ways.

Them that walk. This phrase describes a specific class of those who are being punished (v. 9).

After the flesh. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 7. In the lives of the false teachers flesh was the dominant factor and they followed its leadership (cf. on Rom. 8:4, 5).

Lust. Gr. *epithumia* (see on Rom. 7:7).

Uncleanness. Gr. *miasmos*, “pollution,” “corruption.” From *miasmos* is derived our English word “miasma.” The word occurs only here in the NT and refers to the act of defiling or pollution (cf. on v. 20). From these words, and vs. 2, 12–22, it is clear that those who troubled the church spread not only false doctrines but also gross immorality. It is a fact that throughout the history of the Christian church weak doctrines have often been accompanied by weak morals. Those who depart from God’s standard of truth find it easy to abandon His standard of personal conduct also.

Despise government. Or, “despise lordship.” The word for “lordship” (*kuriotēs*) is translated “dominion,” and is applied to angels in Eph. 1:21 and Col. 1:16, and possibly in Jude 8. However, most commentators agree that here it refers to the lordship of Christ. In v. 1 the apostle foretells that the heretical teachers will deny “the Lord that bought them,” and in v. 11 he implies that they pay scant respect to the Lord, so they may be truly said to despise the lordship of Jesus Christ. One way of testing the validity of new teaching is to analyze its approach to the Deity—is it truly reverent, or does it treat the Godhead disrespectfully?

Presumptuous. Or, “daring men,” that is, recklessly adventurous persons, especially in their opposition to authority.

Selfwilled. Literally, “self-pleasing,” implying arrogance. The deceivers were determined to have their own way, even in defiance of authority.

Not afraid. The clause reads literally, “they do not tremble [when] blaspheming glories.” Opinion is divided as to whom the “dignities,” or “glories” (*doxai*), refer. Some see a reference to evil angels, but it is difficult to understand how these can be blasphemed. Others, with some reason, apply the words to good angels, suggesting that the false teachers spoke in a derogatory way about them. Yet others find a reference to the whole heavenly family, including God, Christ, and the angels. Still others prefer to see a reference to local earthly authorities against whom the heretics recklessly speak evil. Final choice between the possible applications depends on the interpretation given to v. 11 (see comment there).

11. Whereas. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 8, 9. Peter now points out the contrast between the weak teachers and the mighty angels. The first are reckless enough to accuse even the highest authorities, whereas angels, who are mightier than the false instructors, maintain a discreet silence in such matters.

Angels. The context makes it reasonably clear that Peter refers to the holy angels, not to fallen ones.

Greater. That is, superior to the false teachers.

Power and might. Rather, “might and power.”

Railing accusation. Or, “blasphemous judging,” that is, reviling judgment.

Against them. The interpretation of v. 11 depends on the application of these words. Some refer them to the false teachers, but the context suggests that they may best be applied to the “dignities,” in which case the sense of the passage will be: The heretical teachers freely speak evil about the authorities, while holy angels, though far superior to those teachers, out of godly fear, refrain from making any such accusation. How brazen appears the conduct of the teachers in the light of such a comparison!

Before the Lord. That is, in the divine presence, where the holy angels constantly dwell. Though they do not realize it, the false teachers also live constantly in God's sight, and should act as reverently as do the sinless angels.

12. These. That is, the false teachers. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 10.

Natural brute beasts. Or, "irrational creatures." The word translated "beasts" is *zōa*, "living creatures" (see on Rev. 4:6).

To be taken and destroyed. Literally, "for capture and destruction." Peter's devastating description emphasizes the irrational and unspiritual nature of these lascivious deceivers.

Speak evil. Gr. *blasphēmō*, "to blaspheme," "to speak evil against." Compare the use of *blasphēmō* in vs. 2, 10, and of the adjective *blasphēmos*, "slandorous," "blasphemous" in v. 11.

Things. The clause reads literally, "in which things they are ignorant" (cf. 1 Tim. 1:7). The deluded ones could have gained an understanding of divine matters, but chose to remain in ignorance and to lead others astray.

And shall ... corruption. Rather, "in their perishing also they shall perish." There is a play upon words in the Greek that is not brought out in the KJV. The writer may be suggesting that the false instructors will perish as do the animals, or that they will perish as a result of their own corrupt doings. Both interpretations are valid, and the end is the same—the teachers will be destroyed.

13. Shall receive. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading "suffering wrong," making the complete clause read, "suffering wrong as the hire of wrongdoing."

They that. The clause reads literally, "counting riot a pleasure." The word for "pleasure" (*hēdonē*) often implies sensual gratification (cf. Luke 8:14; Titus 3:3; James 4:1, 3), whereas that for "riot" (*truphē*) connotes softness, luxurious living. Peter thus describes the seducers as indulging in the sensual lusts that belong to the darkness of night, yet esteeming them as the legitimate, happy experiences that are above reproach even in the broad daylight.

Spots. These teachers are spots and blemishes on the face of the earth, and particularly on the church.

Sporting themselves. Or, "reveling," from the same root as the word translated "riot" in the previous clause.

Deceivings. Gr. *apatai*, "deceits," but important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading *agapai*, "love feasts" (cf. Jude 12; see Vol. VI, pp. 45, 46; see on 1 Cor. 11:20). It is possible that Peter deliberately refrained from using *agapai*, since he could not bring himself to mention the sacred love feast, which these false teachers were bringing into dishonor by their drunken revelings. Even if we retain the reading *apatai*, "deceivings," which is better attested, we must abide by the context and recognize that the apostle has the love feast in mind. Compare Paul's description of the drunkenness and overeating at the Lord's Supper that was practiced by some in the Corinthian church (see on 1 Cor. 11:20–22).

Feast. Gr. *suneuōcheō*, from *sun*, “together,” *euōcheō*, “to feed abundantly.” That Peter speaks of the false teachers feasting with the believers suggests that the troublemakers were still members of the church, which fact would make their influence still more dangerous.

14. Of adultery. Rather, “of an adulteress.” This gives a graphic picture of men whose thoughts continually mirror the image of an adulteress. Their chief desires are sexual, and every woman they meet is immediately appraised from that viewpoint (cf. on Matt. 5:28). It is not surprising that they find themselves unable to control their passions and keep from sin.

Beguiling. Or, “baiting,” that is, offering enticements.

Unstable. Gr. *astēriktoi*, literally, “not propped up,” “not grounded.” The primary reference is to the women whom the false teachers enticed into adulterous practices. It is possible that the deceivers attended the love feasts in order to get acquainted with women whom they could afterward seduce. Peter’s reference may also include men who were led astray by the teachers’ evil influence.

Palestine in the Time of Herod Agrippa II and the Roman Procurators²

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (2 Pe 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (2 Pe 2:15). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



Exercised. Gr. *gumnazō*, “to train in gymnastic discipline,” whence our word “gymnastic.” These false teachers carefully trained themselves to acquire the skill by which to gain the things they desired.

With covetous practices. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading “in covetousness.” This is a further vice to which these teachers are addicted, in addition to their blasphemy and sensuality.

Cursed children. Literally, “children of a curse,” that is, those who are deserving of execration, so evil are their characters.

15. Have forsaken. Or, “having completely abandoned.” Compare vs. 15, 16 with the parallel passage in Jude 11.

Right. Gr. *euthus* (see on Acts 8:21).

Way. Gr. *hodos* (see on Acts 9:2). Peter here declares that the opponents had to all intents completely abandoned the Christian faith.

Gone astray. Or, “have been caused to wander.” Those who leave the Christian way end by wandering.

Following. Or, “following out,” implying a close imitation (cf. on v. 2).

Way of Balaam. Instead of following the way of Christ these false teachers have slavishly followed the course taken by Balaam. Throughout this chapter it appears that Peter has had Balaam in mind as the prototype of the deceivers of his own day. They have loved financial gain and have encouraged sensuality, even as did the ancient prophet. For comment on Balaam’s conduct see on Num. 22 to 24.

Bosor. Called “Beor” in Num. 22:5.

Wages of unrighteousness. The same Greek phrase is rendered “reward of unrighteousness” in v. 13. Balaam and the false teachers had their eyes on the material reward accruing from their evil practices.

16. His iniquity. Or, “his own transgression [of the law].” Balaam’s wrongdoing was neither unnoticed nor unrebuked, and Peter implies that the false teachers’ conduct will not go unpunished.

Ass. Gr. *hupozugios*, literally, “under a yoke,” applied to the ass as the common beast of burden in the East.

Speaking. Gr. *phtheggomai*, “to give out a sound,” “to utter [a cry or a noise],” used for any noise made by men or animals and does not necessarily refer to articulate speech. Hence Peter defines the noise made by the ass as “man’s voice” (cf. Num. 22:27–31).

Forbad. Or, “restrained,” “checked.” The phenomenon of the speaking ass halted Balaam in his rebellious course and enabled him to recognize the angel and be responsive to divine directions.

Madness. Here, the state of being beside oneself. Had Balaam kept his senses, refusing to be unbalanced by covetous desires, he would not have erred so grievously. The apostle again leaves his readers to apply the illustration to the false teachers, who followed in the way of Balaam.

17. These. Compare vs. 17–19 with the parallel passage in Jude 12, 13, 16. Peter now leaves his illustration and speaks directly of the false teachers (cf. v. 12).

Wells without water. Or, “waterless springs.” The deceivers claimed to refresh those who were spiritually thirsty, but when the thirsty ones reached them they were bitterly disappointed, for the teachers had no living water to give. They were spiritually dry (cf. John 4:14; Rev. 7:17; 21:6).

Clouds. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “mists,” and the clause then reads literally, “mists driven by a squall.” The heretical teachers, claiming to bring light, brought a darkening mist that blotted out the spiritual landscape and prevented Christians from seeing where they were going. Furthermore, the “mists” were not consistent, the instruction veered to and fro under the impulse of the teachers’ passions.

Mist of darkness. Literally, “blackness of the darkness,” that is, of the nether world. Compare on v. 4, where the word for “blackness” (*zophos*) is also used.

Is reserved. Rather, “has been reserved” (cf. vs. 4, 9). Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of the words “for ever,” although they are well attested in the corresponding passage in Jude 13.

18. Speak. Gr. *phtheggomai* (see on v. 16). Peter does not credit the deceivers with ordered speech, but describes them as uttering sounds as did the ass (v. 16).

Great swelling words. Gr. *huperogka*, literally, “overswollen [matters],” that is, extravagant, bombastic speech, with possible reference to philosophical terms bandied by Gnostic teachers (cf. on Jude 16).

Allure. The Greek word is the same as that translated “beguiling” v. 14.

Lusts of the flesh. Compare the phrase “lust of uncleanness” (see on v. 10).

Wantonness. Gr. *aselgeiai* (see on v. 2).

Those that were clean escaped. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “those who are just escaping.” These are they whom the false instructors are enticing with their

grandiose words, philosophical arguments, and sensual allurements. The intended victims had only recently accepted Christianity, or were on the point of accepting it, when they were faced with the specious deceptions of these heretical workers. Those who deceived such “little ones” certainly merited the sentence prescribed by the Saviour (Matt. 18:6).

Them who live in error. That is, the pagan Gentiles with whom the young converts had been closely associated and from whose influence they had just succeeded in escaping.

19. Promise them liberty. The false teachers tried to make it appear that those who followed the ways they were advocating would be free from all irksome restrictions. But the liberty they promised was lawless license, not Christian freedom (see on 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:13). The great liberty that a Christian should possess—freedom from sin—the deceivers could not offer and did not wish to achieve.

Servants. Or, “slaves.”

Corruption. Gr. *phthora* (see on ch. 1:4). *Phthora* conveys the thought of destruction as well as moral filthiness. The false teachers were incapable of helping anyone else onto a higher moral plane, since they themselves were shackled to sensual vice.

Of whom. Or, “by what,” referring to corruption.

Overcome. Or, “worsted,” as in a fight, when the weaker contestant is defeated.

Brought in bondage. Rather, “has been enslaved” (see on Rom. 6:16). Although the false teachers did not know it, sin had defeated them and they had become its abject slaves. How could they offer liberty to others?

20. For if ... escaped. The clause reads literally, “for if having escaped.” To give the believers a solemn warning concerning the dangers and results of apostasy, the apostle uses the case of those who have been deluded into following the false teachers.

Pollutions. Gr. *miasmata*, “those things which defile,” “defilements” that come as a result of contact with the world (cf. on v. 10).

World. See on 1 John 2:15.

Knowledge. Gr. *epignōsis* (see on ch. 1:2).

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Here the apostle attributes to our Lord a multiple title that embodies most of His glorious attributes and represents His major offices (see on Matt. 1:1, 21, 23; Luke 2:29; John 13:13; John 20:28). He who has gained the full knowledge of Jesus will have a personal understanding of the Saviour’s powers, having experienced them in his own life. His experimental knowledge of Christ will have caused him to flee the world and its defilements, and the power of Christ will have enabled him completely to escape from them. Peter sees his own flock as having thus escaped and is anxious that they should not be inveigled into returning to the world by the enticements held out by the false teachers.

Entangled. Gr. *emplekō*, “to interweave,” hence, “to be entangled.” As gladiators became enmeshed in each other’s net during combat, so the believer who yields to worldly allurements will become hopelessly entangled and easily destroyed. The word “therein” may be rendered “in these,” that is, in the defilements of the world, or “by these,” implying that it is by the defilements that the Christian is overcome.

Overcome. See on v. 19.

The latter. The clause reads literally, “the last things for them have become worse than the first.” He who has once been a Christian but has gone back to the world becomes

spiritually hardened and less responsive to spiritual appeals. His salvation thus becomes more difficult (cf. Matt. 12:45; Luke 11:26; Heb. 6:4–8; 10:26).

21. *It had been better.* The position of the apostates would have been better had they never become Christians, for then they could have been approached as pagans. The beauty of Christian truth would have made a strong impression on their hearts, and they would have been more susceptible to the converting influences of the gospel.

Known. Gr. *epignōskō*, the verb that corresponds to the noun *epignōsis* (see on ch. 1:2). He who has once gained full knowledge of the Saviour can never be the same as before the knowledge came to him. Knowledge brings responsibility. One is accountable for what he has come to know. Although a backsliding Christian may return to worldly ways he cannot escape accountability for the saving knowledge of Christ that he once accepted and then rejected.

The way of righteousness. Rather, “the way of the righteousness,” stressing that it is the one and only way of salvation (see on vs. 2, 15).

Turn. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading “turn back,” emphasizing the complete rejection of the Christian way of life.

The holy commandment. Peter’s use of the definite article and the singular number indicates reference to a specific concept. In Rom. 7:12 Paul uses a similar construction to refer to a particular commandment, the tenth. Here Peter’s language seems to refer to the complete body of instruction given to Christians to guide them in “the way of righteousness.”

Delivered. Gr. *paradidōmi*, “to hand over,” “to turn over,” “to hand down,” “to pass on.” The verb is related to the noun, *paradosis*, “a giving over,” that is, tradition (2 Thess. 3:6; see on Mark 7:3). Peter thus refers to instruction the believers had received from Christian teachers.

22. Proverb. Gr. *paroimia* (see on John 10:6). The content of the proverb has been realized in the case of the apostates.

The dog. This proverb is recorded in Prov. 26:11 with reference to a fool’s returning to his own folly. Here Peter uses it to illustrate the vile and foolish conduct of those who, having left the moral filth of the world, return to revel in it once more.

Sow. This is not a Biblical proverb, but it may have been current in Jewish circles of Peter’s day. The figure is used to depict the Christian who has been washed clean of the world’s pollutions but, through backsliding, has returned to soil himself once more with the moral impurities from which he had been rescued by the gospel.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 535; 3T 485

1, 2 AA 587; PP 686
1–35T 145

2 CH 591; 5T 291

2, 3 8T 199

4 PP 53; SR 31

5 PP 102; 4T 308

7, 8 PP 168

8 5T 210

9 DA 528

10, 11 PP 386
12–155T 145
15 PP 439
16 PP 442
17 AA 535
19 PP 67
20 1T 284
20, 21 AA 535

CHAPTER 3

1 *He assureth them of the certainty of Christ's coming to judgment, against those scorers who dispute against it: 8 warning the godly, for the long patience of God, to hasten their repentance. 10 He describeth also the manner how the world shall be destroyed: 11 exhorting them, from the expectation thereof, to all holiness of life: 15 and again, to think the patience of God to tend to their salvation, as Paul wrote to them in his epistles.*

1. This second epistle. It is natural to read in these words a reference to 1 Peter as being the first of the apostle's epistles, and the present letter as being the second of the pair. No conclusive arguments have yet been presented against this view, and Peter's words may be taken as incidental proof of the common authorship of the two epistles.

Beloved. The apostle has now left the distasteful subject of the false teachers (ch. 2) and turns to exhort his readers concerning last-day events. In doing so he naturally employs the term "beloved," here and in vs. 8, 14, 17 (cf. on 1 John 3:2).

Now. Or, "already." The opening clause reads literally, "This already, beloved, a second epistle I am writing to you," which may suggest that the second epistle was written soon after the first.

In both which. That is, in both of which, referring to both letters, the first and the second.

I stir up. Gr. *diegeirō* (see on ch. 1:13).

Pure minds. Gr. *eilikrinēs dianoia*, used in classical Greek for "pure reason," but here in the sense of an unsullied or sincere mind. For comment on *eilikrinēs* see on Phil. 1:10. *Dianoia* is the mind as the faculty of understanding, feeling, desiring. Peter is crediting his readers with having a mind (singular) that is unpolluted by sensuality, in happy contrast with the minds of the false teachers.

By way of remembrance. The same Greek phrase occurs in ch. 1:13 (see comment there). In this instance Peter wishes to remind his readers of previous instruction concerning the return of their Lord in power and glory.

2. That ye may be mindful. Literally, "to remind," expressing Peter's purpose in writing his epistle. He intended to emphasize past instruction rather than to impart new teaching. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 17.

Holy prophets. Peter refers in this verse to what is in the OT and to what had thus far been written of the NT.

Commandment. See on ch. 2:21.

Us the apostles. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "your apostles," and the final clause of the sentence may be then rendered "and of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour from [or, "given by"] your apostles." The commandment, or instruction, came from the Lord but was delivered by the apostles.

3. Knowing this first. Compare on ch. 1:20, where the same phrase occurs. Here the apostle uses the phrase as a preface to the statement he is about to make, which must be considered against the background of the combined teachings of the prophets and the apostles. Peter does not cite any specific passage from the prophets or the apostles, but assumes that what he is about to say will be recognized as consonant with the general tenor of their teachings on the subject under discussion. Compare the parallel passage in Jude 18.

There shall come. On the basis of the teachings of the prophets and the apostles, Peter's readers already knew what to expect "in the last days." The apostle had warned them that "the end of all things is at hand" (see on 1 Peter 4:7), and apparently considers his counsel timely and appropriate. See below under "in the last days." Compare on 1 John 2:18; Jude 18.

In the last days. Literally, "upon [the] last days." The word "last" may be taken in the singular sense as referring to one last day, or, as textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10), in the plural, "the last days." It is his purpose to enlighten his readers so that they will not be led astray by those who scoff at the thought of a soon return of the Saviour. He is not here making specific statements regarding the time of Christ's coming, but is bent on preparing his flock for "the last days" whenever those days may appear. See Additional Note on Rom. 13; see on 1 Peter 4:7; Rev. 1:1.

Scoffers. Or, "mockers." Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the inclusion of the words "in mockery" before "scoffers." This would strengthen Peter's description of the skeptics as "mockers" and show that they were exercising their evil gift in ridiculing the idea of the second coming.

After their own lusts. Literally, "according to their own lusts," that is, as their lusts prompted them. These scoffers are akin to the false teachers in that they are governed by their own passions (cf. on ch. 2:2, 10). Their passions decided their theology—sensual-minded men cannot ardently desire the return of the Sinless One.

4. And saying. It is clear that the church had been well instructed concerning Christ's return and that the scoffers were openly ridiculing the teaching of the apostles concerning that event.

Where is the promise? This is not a reference to one particular promise but to the combined declarations of the prophets and the apostles as to the certainty of the second coming. The scoffers' question indicates their skepticism—they did not expect the promises to be fulfilled.

Coming. Gr. *parousia*, a common NT word for Christ's return (see on Matt. 24:3).

The fathers. This may be interpreted in two ways: as a reference (1) to the patriarchs (cf. on Rom. 9:5; 1 Cor. 10:1; Heb. 1:1) or (2) to the immediately previous generation of Christians who personally heard Jesus and the apostles proclaiming the promises of the Lord's return.

Fell asleep. Gr. *koimaomai*, "to sleep." Of the 18 occurrences of *koimaomai* in the NT, 14 refer to the sleep of death (see on John 11:11; 1 Thess. 4:13; etc.).

All things. The clause reads literally, "all things so remain through from the beginning of creation." The argument has a strangely modern ring. Its secular, skeptical tone seems to echo the thinking of our own day. By appealing to such a wide span of history, from creation to their own day, the mockers seem to have a most plausible argument. They say, in effect: The laws of nature continue to function season after season

with amazing uniformity and regularity, and have done so throughout history; why should they not continue to do so? In v. 5 Peter replies to this line of reasoning.

5. *This*. The clause reads literally, “this escapes their notice by their own will.” The scoffers knew of the Flood but deliberately chose to ignore the cataclysm and its message to mankind. By so doing they closed their minds against the idea of the possibility of further divine intervention when Christ should return.

By the word of God. Peter believes in the same creative power as do the other Bible writers, that is, the spoken word of God (cf. on Gen. 1:3; Ps. 33:6, 9; etc.).

The heavens. Gr. *ouranoi*, simply “heavens.” Peter here refers to the atmospheric “heavens.” Some commentators see in the plural, “heavens,” a reference to the Jewish concept of seven heavens above the earth. But Peter is concerned with Scripture and not with tradition. However, the Hebrew word for “heavens” never occurs in the singular, though in the OT reference is frequently to the atmospheric envelope that surrounds the earth. In form the word is plural, but in meaning it is generally singular. Peter here undoubtedly reflects this common idiomatic Hebrew usage. The plural form *ouranoi*, “heavens,” often occurs in the Greek but in the KJV of Matt. 5:45; Mark 1:11; Luke 10:20; Eph. 3:15 etc., is translated in the singular form “heaven.” Peter so uses it five times in this epistle (here and vs. 7, 10, 12, 13).

Of old. Or, “from long past.” Some commentators interpret the phrase as “originally,” that is, from creation, which is clearly Peter’s meaning.

The earth. Rather, “earth.”

Standing. The clause may be translated, “compounded out of water and by means of water.” One of the steps in preparing the earth as an abode for man was the gathering of the waters into one place (Gen. 1:9). Peter is not attempting to describe creation in modern scientific terms, but seeks to explain God’s creative work to the men of his own day.

6. *Whereby*. Literally, “by means of which things,” that is, the waters that were above and on the earth. These, used first in creation, are now shown to have been used also for destruction.

The world that then was. Literally, “the then world,” the antediluvian world. Here Peter is probably referring to the wicked inhabitants of the antediluvian world and their civilization.

Overflowed. Gr. *katakluzō*, “to overwhelm with water,” “to flood,” “to deluge,” a forceful word not used elsewhere in the NT.

Perished. Gr. *apollumi*, “to destroy utterly,” “to demolish and lay waste,” a fitting word to describe the desolation caused by the Flood. See Gen. 7:11–24.

7. *The heavens*. The phrase reads literally, “the now heavens and the earth,” that is, our present heavens and earth, in contrast with “the then world” (see on v. 6).

Same word. That is, the word of God (v. 5).

Kept in store. Gr. *thēsauroizō*, “to treasure up,” whence our word “thesaurus.” The tense implies that the heavens have been, and are being preserved.

Reserved. Or, “being kept” (cf. ch. 2:4, 9).

Unto fire. Rather, “for fire,” or “with fire.” According to the Greek text the words can be linked with “reserved” or with “kept in store,” but most scholars prefer to construe

them with *thēsaūrizō*. The translation would thus read, “are being treasured up for fire,” that is, for fire to work its destruction as water did its destructive work at the time of the Flood (cf. on Mal. 4:1; 2 Thess. 1:8).

Against the day of judgment. Literally, “unto a day of judging” (see on 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Peter 2:4–9).

Perdition. Gr. *apōleia* (see on ch. 2:1, 3).

Ungodly men. Literally, “the ungodly men.” For comment on “ungodly” see on ch. 2:5. It is animate sinners, not inanimate matter, that is to be judged and punished.

8. But. The opening clause may be translated, “but let not this one thing escape your notice, beloved” (cf. v. 5). In other words, scoffers deliberately shut their eyes to facts, but Christians should never fall into that grievous error. “This one thing” is defined in the following clause.

One day. Peter’s thought is derived from the truth expressed in Ps. 90:4. God is eternal. With Him there is no past, no future; all things are eternally present. He has no need for our limited concept of time, and we cannot confine Him or His ideas to our scale of days and years. In stressing this truth Peter is rebuking the skeptical impatience of the scoffers, who, judging God by their own puny standards, doubt whether He will fulfill His promises connected with the end of the world.

The context makes clear that Peter is not here setting up a prophetic yardstick for computing time periods. Verse 7 deals with the fact that God is patiently awaiting the day of judgment, and v. 9 that He is “long-suffering to us-ward.”

9. The Lord. It is difficult to decide to which person of the Godhead this refers. In v. 15 “our Lord” could very well refer to Jesus, and in v. 18 Jesus is called “our Lord”; but “the day of the Lord” (v. 10) is also described as “the day of God” (v. 12). Nor does it matter which person is here designated, for the purposes and promises of the Father and the Son are identical. All that Peter ascribes to one may be equally applied to the other. But judging by Peter’s usage in this epistle (chs. 1:2, 8, 11, 16; 2:1; 3:2), the weight of evidence suggests that in this instance “the Lord” is Christ.

Slack. Gr. *bradunō*, “to delay,” “to loiter,” used only here and in 1 Tim. 3:15 in the NT.

His promise. That is, the promise of His coming (v. 4), which was the point at issue with the scoffers.

Some men. That is, the mockers (v. 3).

Slackness. Or, “delay.” The Greek noun is derived from the same root as the verb *bradunō* (see above under “slack”). The skeptics supposed that God’s plans had been hindered or changed because Christ had not yet returned. They failed to realize that God is almighty and unchangeable and that His designs will all fulfilled in due time (DA 32).

But. Gr. *alla*, a strong adversative, which may here be rendered “on the contrary,” and thus point out the contrast between the mockers’ accusation and the facts concerning the Lord’s trustworthiness.

Longsuffering. Gr. *makrothumeō*, from *makros*, “long,” and *thumos*, “passion,” “anger,” hence, “to be slow to anger,” “to be patient” (see on Rom. 2:4; for the noun *makrothumia* see on 2 Cor. 6:6). For inspired descriptions of the Lord’s character see Ex. 34:6; Ps. 86:5, 15; 103:8.

To us-ward. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “to you,” that is, the readers, the Christian saints who need to remind themselves of God’s patient watch-care over them, especially in times when they are tempted to doubt His control of affairs.

Not willing. Or, “not wishing.” Peter here employs the verb *boulomai*, which often expresses the inclination of the mind, as “to want,” “to desire,” and does not use *thelō*, which generally refers to a set purpose, “to will,” “to determine.” God, far from actively willing the death of sinner, has done all in His power to save him from death (John 3:16). Nevertheless, Peter realizes that some will reject God’s plan of salvation and thereby be lost (2 Peter 3:7).

Perish. Gr. *apollumi* (see on v. 6).

But. Gr. *alla*, a strong adversative (cf. above under “but”) used here to emphasize the contrast between the misinterpretation of God’s nature, namely, that He might be willing for some to perish, and the truth that He wishes all to be saved.

Should come. Gr. *chōreō*, “to make room,” in this case, for repentance; or, “to advance,” that is, to move on to repentance.

Repentance. Gr. *metanoia* (see on 2 Cor. 7:9).

In vs. 8, 9 Peter makes it clear that God’s promise respecting Christ’s return is certain of fulfillment. Any apparent delay in the Lord’s coming is due to God’s unwillingness to close the door of salvation while there is hope of any sinner’s repentance.

10. The day of the Lord. The same as “the day of God” (v. 12). For comment see on Acts 2:20; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:2.

Will come. In the Greek the verb is placed in an emphatic position. The fact that the day of the Lord will come is beyond doubt.

Thief. Gr. *kleptēs* (see on John 10:1). The same figure is used by Jesus (Matt. 24:43), by Paul (1 Thess. 5:2), and by John (Rev. 3:3; 16:15) to stress the unexpectedness of the Lord’s return. He who wishes to be saved must be right with God *before* the day of the Lord arrives, for there will be no opportunity for repentance on that great day.

In the night. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words.

In the which. That is, in the day of the Lord.

The heavens. See on v. 5.

Pass away. Gr. *parerchomai*, “to pass away,” “to perish” (cf. Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Rev. 21:1).

With a great noise. Gr. *rhoizēdon*, an onomatopoeic adverb indicating the noise made by birds’ wings or by an object hurtling through the air. Peter probably uses the word to represent the sound made by roaring flames.

Elements. Gr. *stoicheia*, “things arranged in rows,” applied to the letters of the alphabet as being set in rows; and, later, to the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars (cf. on Gal. 4:3). It is probable, though not certain, that Peter here speaks of the physical elements of which our world is composed, matter that will “melt” under the cleansing fires of the last day.

Melt. Gr. *luō*, generally translated “to loosen,” but rendered “to dissolve” in vs. 11, 12, in the sense of “to break up,” or “to break down.” The KJV idea of “to melt” is doubtless drawn from the mention of “fervent heat.”

With fervent heat. Gr. *kausōō*, a medical term, “to be parched with fever,” hence here and in v. 12, “to burn up.” For the association of fire and heat with Christ’s appearing see on Ps. 50:3; Mal. 4:1; 2 Thess. 1:8; cf. on Rev. 20:9; etc.

The earth ... therein. That is, all earthly things the works of man and of nature.

Burned up. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this reading and “shall be found.” The reading of the KJV suits the context, but the alternate reading is also possible, giving the thought that the worthlessness of earthly, material things will be discovered and displayed before the universe.

11. Seeing then. In view of the certainty that every evidence of sin is to be destroyed, it behooves those who know of the impending day when the present world will be dissolved in a holocaust of fire, to be diligent that they separate every trace of sin from their thoughts and their lives.

What manner of persons? Or, “what sort of men?” from an older word meaning “from what country?” Here Peter reveals that his great concern is not with events but with men, that is, with the characters of his readers. He has gone into detail about last-day events in order to bring before them the imperative need for holiness, and now devotes the remainder of his epistle to impressing this need upon them.

Ought ye to be. That is, with special reference to character.

In all ... godliness. Literally, “in holy behaviors and godliness,” both nouns being in the plural in Greek, since Peter is making his thought as comprehensive as possible and wishes his readers to bring every part of their conduct into conformity to the highest Christian standards. For comment on “conversation” (*anastrophē*) see on ch. 2:7; for “godliness” (*eusebeia*) see on Tim. 2:2.

12. Looking for. Gr. *prosdokaō*, “to expect,” “to wait for,” used three times in vs. 12–14, always implying eager anticipation. The believers were ever to be on the alert for their Lord’s return (cf. on Matt. 24:42, 44).

Hasting unto. Rather, “hastening,” that is, expediting the arrival of “the day of God”; or, “earnestly desiring” that day. Those who have confessed their sins can eagerly anticipate Christ’s coming and can devote their energies to spreading the gospel, thus preparing the way for His appearing (see COL 69).

Coming. Gr. *parousia* (see on Matt. 24:3).

Day of God. There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 10) for the reading “day of the Lord,” but see on v. 10, where it is suggested that “the day of the Lord” and “the day of God” are synonymous phrases.

Wherein. Rather, “by reason of which,” that is, because of the coming of the day of God.

Heavens. That is, the atmospheric heavens (see on v. 5).

Being on fire. See on v. 10.

Dissolved. Gr. *luō* (see on v. 10).

Elements. See on v. 10.

Melt. Gr. *tēkō*, “to make liquid,” that is, to melt. In the Greek the tense is present, giving dramatic vividness to the narrative.

With fervent heat. See on v. 10. Peter has repeated his exposition of events associated with his Lord’s return in order to impress their certainty and solemnity on the minds of his readers. He now turns to happier matters that follow the dissolution of earthly things.

13. His promise. No matter what the scoffers may have thought of the Lord’s promise (v. 4), Peter shows (v. 9 and here) that he implicitly trusts it and orders his own life in accordance with it.

Look for. See on v. 12.

New. Gr. *kainos*, “new” in the sense of being different, new in kind, rather than *neos*, which generally means “recent,” new in point of time. Here Peter is anticipating the renovated heavens and earth that have been cleansed from all defilement (cf. on Rev. 21:1).

Dwelleth. Or, “makes its home,” with a suggestion of permanency. Righteousness is depicted as being the permanent resident of the new heavens and new earth (see on Isa. 11:9).

14. Beloved. The apostle uses the affectionate address (see on v. 1) by way of special appeal.

Seeing that ye look. The clause reads literally, “these things expecting.” A knowledge and anticipation of the end of earthly history places upon the believer a spiritual responsibility that Peter now emphasizes.

Be diligent. Gr. *spoudazō* (see on ch. 1:10).

Found of him. The Christian lives in expectation of coming face to face with his Lord. The prospect stimulates him to prepare for the event, that Christ may find him faultless.

Peace. See on Rom. 5:1.

Without spot, and blameless. Compare on Eph. 1:4; Phil. 2:15; Rev. 14:5. He whom Christ so finds will certainly be “in peace,” that is, possessed of the inner calm that comes from sinlessness. Such a one will be at peace with God and with his fellow men. In contrast, notice Peter’s description of the false teachers (2 Peter 2:13). Compare the remorse of the wicked (see on Jer. 8:20).

15. Longsuffering. Gr. *makrothumia*, the related noun form of the verb *makrothumeō* (see on v. 9).

Our Lord. Probably referring to Christ (see on v. 9).

Salvation. Not that Christ’s long-suffering *is* salvation, but it makes salvation possible. The scoffers were accounting the Lord’s delay as proof that His promises would never be fulfilled, but Peter shows that it is rather an evidence of the Saviour’s merciful patience. He waits that all who will may have the opportunity to accept salvation.

Our beloved brother Paul. If it be assumed that Peter is not using “our” in an editorial sense, then his words imply that Paul was well known and well loved by the readers. Even if “our” is used like the editorial “we,” the words establish Peter’s affection for Paul, in spite of any past difference of opinion (see on Gal. 2:11–14).

Wisdom given. Peter here implies that Paul had no inherent supply of spiritual wisdom but was dependent upon the divine gift, even as were his brethren.

Written unto you. Identification of the particular Pauline epistles to which Peter here refers depends on the answer given to the following question: (1) What subject does Peter have in mind? Is it only the apparent delay in the Lord's coming, is it the question of moral laxness in the church, or is it the general topic of Christ's return? (2) To whom was Peter's epistle written? Commentators venture many answers to the problems thus raised, but no definitive solution seems yet possible. If it be accepted that Peter's epistle was written to Asiatic Christians (see p. 547), then the Pauline epistles referred to would likely be those to the Galatians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians, or to other letters not now preserved. One thing is clear: Paul's writings were in circulation, they were accepted as authoritative, and Peter could appeal to them in support of his own instruction.

16. All his epistles. In the large cities of the Roman Empire letters were readily copied for a small fee, and their rapid distribution was assured by means of the excellent communications provided by the network of Roman roads. It is therefore well within the bounds of possibility that most, if not all, of Paul's epistles were in circulation even before his death. There is no way of deciding from these verses whether the great apostle was alive or dead at the time Peter wrote.

These things. As noted in comment on v. 15 it is not certain to which topics Peter is referring, but if the reference is to the general subject of the second coming, that topic finds a place in all of Paul's major letters, and there is no need for a more specific identification.

Hard to be understood. Although these difficult matters are not identified, most commentators agree that they concern questions of moral laxity arising out of a misconstruction of Paul's teaching on the second coming and on the Christian's relation to law, subjects that occupy a prominent place in 1 Thessalonians and Galatians.

Unlearned. In regard to Paul's writings, or perhaps, simply uninstructed, ignorant, on spiritual matters in general. The religion of Jesus Christ, when taken into the heart, refines and cultivates its possessor; but those who reject its precepts leave themselves a prey to temptations such as were presented by the scoffers and false teachers.

Unstable. Gr. *astēriktoi* (see on ch. 2:14).

Wrest. Gr. *strebloō*, "to torture," "to put on the rack," "to twist." The unlearned and unstable distort the Scriptures by twisting and straining their meaning as an inquisitor tortures and strains his victim on the rack.

Other scriptures. There has been much speculation as to which particular writings Peter has in mind. Some limit the reference to the OT, while others include what existed of the NT. A final conclusion may not be possible, but this much is clear, that Peter places Paul's writings on a level with other inspired Scripture (see Vol. V, pp. 185, 186).

Destruction. Gr. *apōleia* (see on ch. 2:1, 3). The Scriptures are designed to lead men to salvation (see on John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), but when they are perverted they lose their beneficent power, and he who misuses them follows a course that can end only in his destruction.

17. Ye. The pronoun is emphatic in the Greek. Peter, turning from the foolish ones who have misconstrued Scripture, is addressing his readers, whom he seeks to protect from such errors.

Know ... before. The believers have been well instructed, and know in advance about the specious teachings of the false teachers. Hence, they should have nothing to fear in

the event the heretical teachings reached them or the wily seducers should come their way.

Beware lest ye also. The believer has a responsibility for his own safety; he cannot afford to fall asleep during the spiritual warfare he is waging (cf. on 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:10–18).

Being led away with. Gr. *sunapagō* (see on Rom. 12:16).

Error of the wicked. In ch. 2:18 the writer has already spoken of “them who live in error,” that is, the pagan Gentiles. He now implies that the false teachers share in the Gentile sins, or “error,” and urgently entreats his readers not to be ensnared by such conduct. For comment on “wicked” (*athesmoi*) see on ch. 2:7.

Stedfastness. Gr. *stērigmos*, used in contrast with *astēriktoi*, “unstable” (v. 16), and here probably best rendered “foundation.” The true Christian has his own sure foundation (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10–14), and has no need to abandon it for any imagined liberty that licentious teachers may seek to offer him.

18. But. This stresses the alternative course offered by the apostle. Instead of being led astray the believer can advance in Christian perfection.

Grow. The tense implies “keep on growing.” Peter’s readers had already made tremendous strides in conduct, but they were not to be satisfied. They were to continue their spiritual growth (cf. on Matt. 5:48; Eph. 4:13–15; 1 Peter 2:2).

Growth is characteristic of the true child of God as it is of all living things inasmuch as he has found a new life in Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15). His goal is a character that resembles the perfect character of his Lord, and a mind that is able to think His thoughts after Him. He aspires to “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (see on Eph. 4:15). In this life, and thereafter in the life to come, the Christian can look forward to endless growth in character and in understanding the will and ways of God. There will ever be new worlds of mind and spirit for him to conquer, new heights to climb, new doors of adventure and opportunity to open.

As Peter has already pointed out (1 Peter 2:2), newborn Christian “babes” grow on the “sincere milk of the word.” But eventually the time comes when they should no longer subsist primarily on a spiritual “milk” diet, but learn to partake of “strong meat” (see on Heb. 5:11–14; 6:1, 2).

Grace. Gr. *charis* (see on John 1:14; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3). Grace is one of the spheres in which the Christian is to grow; he is to become still more firmly established in a personal experience of Christ’s own gracious kindness.

Knowledge. Gr. *gnōsis* (see on 1 Cor. 1:5; 12:8). Here Peter refers to a particular knowledge, the knowledge that makes one fully acquainted with the person, office, work, and power of Jesus Christ. This is a knowledge that can and should increase. Each day of the Christian’s life should add to his understanding of his Master’s mission for the world and for himself. For the comprehensive title here given to Christ, cf. on Matt. 1:1, 21; Luke 2:11; cf. Phil. 3:20; 1 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:4; 2 Peter 1:1, 11.

To him. That is, to Christ. Throughout this epistle Peter has consistently testified to the deity of Christ (cf. chs. 1:11, 17; 2:20; etc.), and now, in the same spirit, addresses the doxology to Him (cf. on Jude 24, 25).

Glory. Gr. *doxa* (see on John 1:14; Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 11:7). In the Greek, *doxa* is preceded by the definite article, and implies that all possible glory is to be ascribed to the Saviour.

For ever. Gr. *eis hēmeran aiōnos*, literally, “unto the day of eternity” (cf. on Rev. 1:6). **Amen.** See on Matt. 5:18. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word, but it may well be retained as a fitting close to the epistle.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 3, 4 AA 535; GC 370; PP 102
4 DA 635; TM 233; 1T 57; 2T 195; 5T 10
5–7 PP 101
8 PP 170
9 GC 48; 2T 194; 5T 485, 649
9–15 AA 536
10 DA 780; EW 54; GC 672; PP 104, 339; SR 428
11 TM 420; 5T 547
11, 12 EW 108; 6T 13
12 COL 69; DA 633
13 MB 17
13, 14 5T 692
14 AA 567; GC x; 1T 340
16 CSW 38; CT 463; Ev 358; FE 308; SC 107; TM 25, 33; 2T 692; 3T 38; 5T 700; 6T 57
17 CT 257; 5T 693
17, 18 AA 537; 5T 483, 537
18 AH 362; CS 165; CSW 30, 69, 106; CT 37, 207, 452, 504; FE 118; ML 101, 103, 171, 249; MM 217; MYP 121; SC 80, 112; SL 59, 93, 95; Te 93, 188; TM 160; 1T 340, 663; 2T 187, 265, 642; 3T 476; 5T 69, 393, 528, 573, 706; 6T 423, 424; 9T 160
3

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (2 Pe 2:15). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.